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THE STORY BEHIND THE TIBET TRADE

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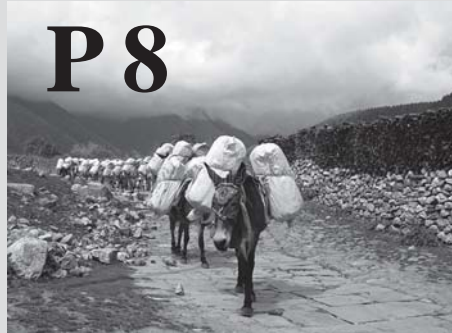
STUMPED for ANSWERS



Sandip C Jain
looks for
answers to the
current
political
situation
prevailing in
the Hills but
hits a brick
wall.....

THE STORY BEHIND THE TIBET TRADE

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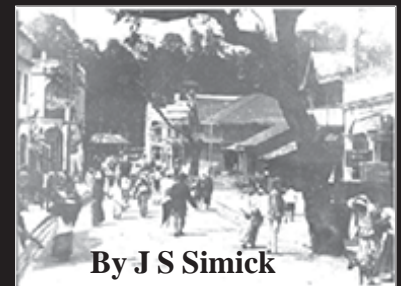
Sandip C Jain traces the
history behind the Indo-Tibet
trade that passed through
Kalimpong and which put this
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DAWA SANGMU SHERPA

The first Lady
WBFS Officer
from the Hills
leads the charge
towards a cleaner
and greener Hills



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for STUMPED ANSWERS

In my 15 years of experience in writing commentaries on the political developments in the Hills of Darjeeling, I have never been more confused. ... I smugly had started to believe that I had an answer to any Political situation that arose in the Hills. Of course I was wrong to be so smug and haughty over my self-assumed knowledge of Hill Politics. The fact is that the situation at hand has almost humbled me and all the smugness I carried around with me, now itself has made me look like a fool in my own eyes.

I had always thought I had a handle on every Political or Social development in the Hills, however absurd or illogical they seemed at that moment. Right from the last days of the DGHC to the emergence of the GJM to the GTA to the 104 days strike, I wrote essays for newspapers and periodicals, locally regionally nationally and internationally, bringing to my readers the inside stories as well as predicting the turn of events. More often than not, I got things right.

Now this situation- the situation that confronts us in the Hills after the 104 days strike has stumped me. What had least been expected has happened and the persons who had least been expected, did it. My personal take was that a situation like this could take place but I had assumed that the protagonist would be someone different and not the ones who actually enacted the part of Brutus in this Hill Drama. The Brutus that I had in mind was someone who was fat and bulky and who craved for center-stage all the time. I was wrong; he wasn't Brutus at the end but just another Mr. India, who disappeared into thin air, leaving the entire Hill populace at the mercy of a pack of hungry wolves.

The populace, which also includes myself, had been forced into a record breaking 104 days strike, the likes of which no civilized society has seen or would like to see.

The minimum wage in West Bengal for an unskilled labourer is Rs. 227.00 per day with food during work hours. Let us assume that in the Hills of Darjeeling it is just Rs. 200.00 without food. A labourer living on this meager earning had to forgo Rs. 20,800.00, which for a poor labourer is a lot of money. More importantly, he lost his self respect when he had to stand in line for hours just to receive a few kilos of rice and daal from NGOs and others in order to put a few morsels of food on his family's plate.

Anyway these are things I have already dealt with in my previous article here in a The Himalayan Times which went with the title **Making Sense out of Nonsense** so I won't get into it again. For now let me concentrate on sharing my confusions with you my readers.

There seems to be nothing that makes sense. People who have no mandate are in the helm of affairs. People who till a few months back swore their lives on a particular individual are now his greatest critics. Persons who controlled the Hills like strict Headmasters are now lost in the wild. Moreover, several who were lost in the wilds after the Madan Tamang case are back at Bhanu Bhawan. Of course the world is round but such things happen only in the brand of Politics that is practiced in the Darjeeling Hills.

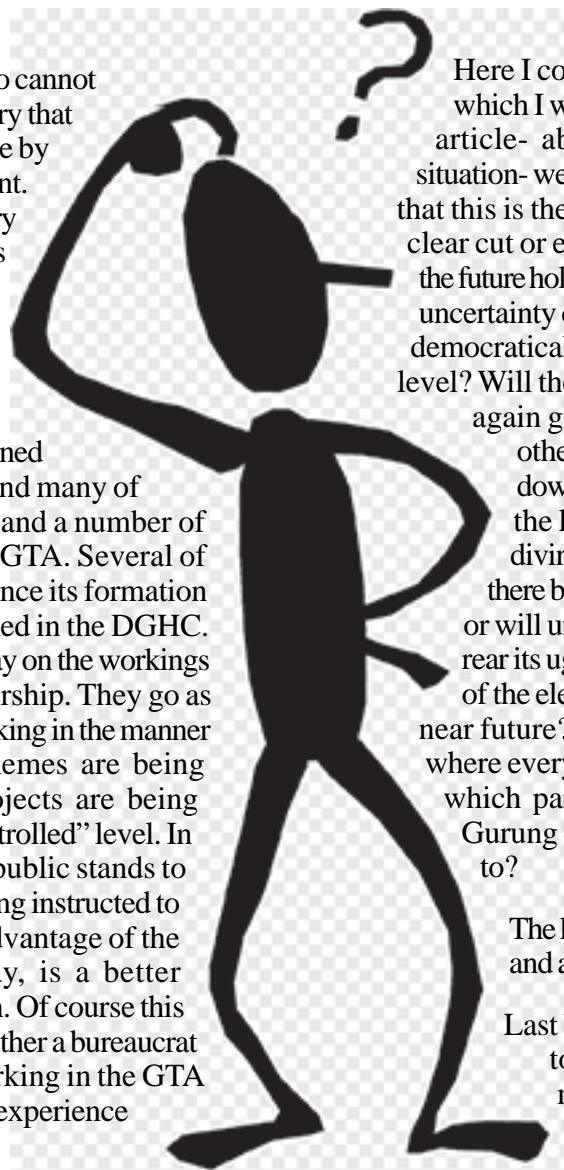
All this is fine- after all everything is fair in love and war and this situation is as good as War. At stake are the hundreds of crores of Rupees that the Hills receive in the form of funding from the State and Central exchequers. What is lost on me as a Political essayist is what next? How will this drama unfold



in the coming future? This status quo cannot last forever. In the democratic country that we live in, the Government has to be by the people and not by the Government. There are laws that govern this country and unconstitutional ways and means cannot be employed for ever.

Now let me dwell in some positives- during my 20 year career as a writer I have made numerous friends (though my writings have earned me an equal number of enemies) and many of my friends are in the bureaucracy and a number of them are currently attached to the GTA. Several of them have been there in the GTA since its formation and a few have actually even worked in the DGHC. They have many positive things to say on the workings of the GTA under the current leadership. They go as far as to say that now the GTA is working in the manner it was supposed to. Welfare schemes are being implemented, long forgotten projects are being executed and corruption is at a “controlled” level. In short, work is being done and the public stands to finally benefit. Departments are being instructed to take up welfare schemes for the advantage of the public. Binay Tamang, they say, is a better administrator than those before him. Of course this is their saying and not mine. I am neither a bureaucrat nor a contractor nor a supplier working in the GTA hence I would not have a firsthand experience or knowledge of what the facts are.

If they really are saying the above truthfully and without any ulterior motives then it argues well for the Hills. The Hills community has lost many years of development, and any move to catch up with the rest of the country is always welcome. It is high time that we in the Hills give the current and coming generations the chance to enjoy the benefits of a healthy environment to develop its mental and intellectual potentials. The three decades of uncertainty has stunted our growth in every sphere and the future generations will not forgive the present one if remedial measures are not taken immediately.



Here I come back to the main race track on which I was running at the beginning of this article- about me being confused by the situation- well my confusion stems from the fact that this is the first time I do not seem to have a clear cut or even a very vague idea about what the future holds for us in the Hills. Will this existing uncertainty continue? Will the near future see a democratically elected government at the GTA level? Will the demand for a separate state once again gain momentum or will something other than a GTA be once again forced down the throats of the Hill residents by the leaders who believe they have the divine right to decide on our behalf? Will there be peace and development in the Hills or will uncertainty and mayhem once again rear its ugly head? What will be the outcome of the elections to the GTA if it is held in the near future? Will it be a free and fair election where everyone will be able to contest? From which party will the supporters of Bimal Gurung contest, that is, if they are allowed to?

The list of questions in my mind is endless and all of them add to my confused state.

Last but not the least, what will happen to those who are in power at the moment? What does the future hold for them? Will they manage to gain popularity like President Shavkat Mirziyoev of Uzbekistan, who

despite coming to power through the back door is now a much respected leader for the good work he is doing? Or will they end up like Dr. Najibullah Ahmadzai of Afghanistan who finished up being at the end of a rope hanging down from the nearest traffic post?

My confusions will take time to clear but I hope when it does, I can see the Hills covered by the glow of development induced happiness rather than the haze of despair... ■

DARJEELING TEA IS CLIMATE CHANGE'S LATEST VICTIM

www.pulitzercenter.org

by Esha Chhabra



Situated at nearly 7,000 feet, at the base of the Himalayas, is the town of Darjeeling—a former British outpost where the tea industry began to flourish. Here, in the region known for producing the “Champagne of teas”, I drove through winding, narrow roads with Jay Neogi, Manager of the Monteviot Tea Estate.

As we made our way through the mountains, Neogi pointed out areas prone to landslides in the monsoons. “A few months later, this will be far messier,” he said when I visited in March. Two years ago, over three dozen people were killed by a landslide here.

Sadly, it’s become a routine affair. In the last 10 years, climate change has taken an especially heavy toll on this iconic tea region. The weather patterns in Darjeeling have changed, topsoil has eroded, rainfall is erratic, landslides are more frequent, and the region has been hit by long, dry spells. This weighs on the environment, but also threatens the tea industry and local livelihoods: this year’s first harvest of tea cost 25 percent more than last, due to lower yields and higher global demand. To combat the potential losses, some entrepreneurs in the region are rethinking their practices to adapt to a new reality.

Despite the seemingly endless deluge of Starbucks coffee shops that have cropped up globally, tea is still more popular than coffee; it’s the second most consumed beverage after water. Though all teas come from the same plant—a bush called *Camellia sinensis*—Darjeeling has long been regarded as one of the most delicate and sought-after of teas, grown and harvested by hand rather than by machinery, and produced at elevation in the terroir of the Himalayas.

But that careful ecosystem is under threat, as are the jobs of workers, who already make dismal wages of less than \$1.50 a day. “*Glaciers are receding. Daily temperatures have risen, nights don’t cool as they once did, and a*

sudden hailstorm can batter a hillside of tea bushes with ice. Particularly problematic is the erratic and unpredictable monsoon,” Jeff Koehler, a Seattle-based author, wrote in one of the most comprehensive books on Darjeeling.

To flourish, tea plants need a balanced amount of rain distributed evenly throughout the year. But that’s not what is happening. Local environmentalist Praful Rao, who has been tracking rainfall in the Darjeeling area, posts the rainfall for each month on his website, with data collected from the Indian Meteorological Society. Last July, the area received about 45 inches of rain, surpassing rainfall records going back to 2012, but the fall and winter months were completely dry.

The problem with unpredictable rain is also what it does to the soil. When the region gets hammered with monsoon rains, Koehler told me, the water washes away topsoil and its nutrients and damages the bush itself.

This is worsened by India’s overuse of pesticides and fertilizers. After the Green Revolution in 1966, the products became more widely available in India, and quickly pumped into all agricultural products, in a push for higher yields to feed more people. But as the UN’s Food and Agricultural Organization reported: *“Their overuse has been degrading the environment. In most cultivated lands, there is a depletion of organic matter which affects the water holding capacity of the soil.”*

India’s Central Soil Water Conservation Research and Training Institute said the country is losing 5,334 million tons of soil every year. The situation is so dire that it has made its way through India’s sluggish bureaucracy: the government is now spearheading research on sustainable tea practices.

“The workers had not been paid in a long time, the estate was not making money, and the soil was weak”

While tea growers cannot control the weather, they can adapt with farming practices that protect and revive topsoil. There are some basic measures, Dr. A.K. Singh, a soil scientist from the Tea Research Association, said, that can help rectify the situation by replenishing nutrients in the soil: organic farming, mulching or covering the soil during the rainy season, and leaving some slopes uncultivated for forestry.

Anil Bansal, co-owner of the Ambootia Group, one of the largest organic tea companies in Darjeeling, and his brother Sanjay decided to try organic farming. The duo have purchased 11 “sick” tea estates in Darjeeling and converted from conventional farming to organic. *“Sick meaning the bushes were in a poor state, the workers had not been paid in a long time, the estate was not making money, and the soil was weak,”* Anil told me.

Ambootia’s flagship tea estate, the largest of all of its properties in Darjeeling, sits just below Kurseong. After nearly a dozen switchbacks, a windy, unpaved road opens up to nearly 2,500 acres of tea gardens, which borders the Teesta River. While converting to organic farming can cause a drop in yield in the initial years, the Bansals were confident that their investment would help the tea farm grow year by year.

And rather than selling their tea at the auction, the Bansals sell directly to their customers, primarily Europeans and Japanese tea companies. Last year gross sales were in excess of \$50 million. Year on year growth rates have been about 20 percent, Sanjay reports. The company now employs over 10,000 people.

“More and more people want organic tea. And we’re happy because it helps us revive all this land as well,” Anil said, sipping a cup of the lightly brewed first flush.

Other tea entrepreneurs are following suit. Teabox is an online shop started by Kaushal Dugar, where customers can buy organic tea straight from vendors to encourage healthier farming practices. And D.K. Mishra, manager of the Goomtee Tea Estate, said more than half of the estate has been converted to organic in the last five years. Now he has plans to make it completely organic.

“Is there a reason not to?” Mishra said. *“It improves the soil, less money is spent on buying fertilizers, medicines, and it’s better for the workers. So it’s not really a question anymore.”* 🌱

Cover Story

THE STORY BEHIND THE TIBET TRADE

BY SANDIP C JAIN



The Tibetan Government based in Lhasa had spurned several attempts by the British Government to enter into any sort of dialogue with them. The British Government considered this as a blotch in their world-wide image. They took this as an insult to the prestige of the greatest and most powerful Empire in the world.



After forcing its way into Lhasa, the British expedition forced the Tibetan Government into signing an agreement which ultimately resolved all the previous issues of dispute and trade and commerce between British India and Tibet finally started in earnest.

Had it not been for the fascination of the British over Tibet, it is certain that Kalimpong would never have earned the prominence and fame that it did during the early and middle decades of the last century. It is a fact that the importance and standing attained during that period was many times more than what a town of its size should have actually deserved. Kalimpong during this period was not just famous in the region but it was often a subject of prime discussion internationally.

The British Government ruling over India at that time was basically a Trading company rather than a proper Government. Its interests in India were all linked to commercial gains. Hence, it was very natural for the East India Company and then later the British India Government to let its roving eye fall on Tibet, India's next door neighbour across the Himalayas. It provided a vast untapped market for British manufactured goods as well as for the unexploited natural resources that Tibet was so richly endowed with. The famed gold mines of Upper Tibet, the borax, and wool and musk that Tibet possessed in abundance was too tempting a prospect for the profit hungry Britishers to overlook. There were other things about Tibet that also evoked the interests of the Britishers. The Britishers were always on the look-out for new and exotic places to explore and map. Tibet was probably one of the only blanks in the World map that needed to be filled up. Hence the desire of the Britishers to enter Tibet and make known the unknown. The British Government also needed to enter Tibet and have a diplomatic relation with the Tibetan Government, under the Dalai Lama, for it believed in the rumour that the Russians were on the verge of spreading its influence over Tibet. The British Government naturally was concerned about the prospect of another super-power being so close to the borders of India, which for the Britishers was their golden goose. The last reason for the desperation of the British Government to enter Tibet was the fact that the Tibetan Government was steadfast in refusing any European from entering their country. The Tibetan Government based in Lhasa had spurned several attempts by the British Government to enter into any sort of dialogue with them. The British Government considered this as a blotch in their world-wide image. They took this as an insult to the prestige of the greatest and most powerful Empire in the world.

With all these in consideration the Britishers started making various attempts to engage the Tibetan Government since the middle of the 18th century till it finally forced its way into Tibet a century and a half later.

The first opportunity to engage the Tibetan Government was provided in the year 1774 when the Tashi Lama, who was

acting as the Regent of Tibet due to the infancy of the Dalai Lama, wrote a letter to Warren Hastings, the Governors-General of India, interceding on behalf of the Bhutanese rulers. Two years earlier the Bhutanese had forced their way into Cooch Behar and after plundering the small kingdom had abducted the king. The people of Cooch Behar made a plea to the British Government of that time and the Britishers interceded on their behalf and drove back the Bhutanese to the mountains where they had come from. The Bhutanese were handed out a heavy defeat. The Tashi Lama interceded on behalf of the Bhutanese and requested vide a letter for forgiveness for the imprudent acts of the Bhutanese. Seizing this opportunity, Warren Hastings decided to reply to the letter and deliver it through his personal envoy. He chose Mr. Bogle to lead the mission who spent several months in Tibet, although he could not visit Lhasa. The mission failed to reach any agreement with the Tibetan Government on the matter of Trade & Commerce but definitely managed to strike up a personal bond with the Tashi Lama. The Governor-General eager to capitalize on this opportunity decided to once again send Mr. Bogle to Tibet in the year 1779 but it came to be known later that the Tashi Lama was already on his way to Peking, hence it was decided that Mr. Bogle would visit and meet the Tashi Lama in China. Unfortunately the Tashi Lama died in China in November 1780 and Mr. Bogle himself died in Calcutta in April 1781.

Undeterred, in 1782, Warren Hastings once again decided to send another mission under Captain Samuel Turner to Tibet when it came to be known that the reincarnation of the Tashi Lama had been identified and had been brought to Shigatse, the seat of the Tashi Lama. This mission was planned to congratulate the Regent and also once again broach the subject of opening trade and commerce between Tibet and British India. Once again Captain Turner was very well treated but despite Turner staying in Tibet for almost a year no concrete agreement on the commencement of trade between the two countries could be agreed upon. The only concession that Turner received was an assurance by the Regent of the infant Tashi Lama that he would encourage all merchants, of Indian origin and natives of India, recommended by the Governor of Bengal, and provide them space to vend their goods and provide them accommodation while in Shigatse. He further assured them transportation and give them protection them while in Tibet.

Immediately after the Turner mission returned to India, the Nepalese forces overran Tibet and plundered and occupied Shigatse. The Tibetans appealed for help from the Chinese who marched into Tibet and evicted the Nepalese. In return the Chinese forced the Tibetans to bar all trade with any third country effectively nullifying



These agreements provided for the opening of a Trade Mart at Yatung which was situated right at the border between Sikkim and Tibet, just across Jelep-la in the Chumbi Valley. This Trade regulation provided for free trade between Tibetan and Indian/British Traders for a period of five years.



These agreements remained only on paper as the Tibetans refused to abide by them stating that since they were not a party to the signing of the agreements they had no bindings towards accepting them. They contended that it was the British and the Chinese who had negotiated and signed the agreements hence they had nothing to do with it.

all the positives that had come out from the Bogle and Turner expeditions.

Unfortunately Warren Hastings' term as Governor-General too soon came to an end and there was no further efforts to engage the Tibetans in the matter of trade or any other subjects for almost a century. A renewed effort was put in once again in 1885, almost a hundred years after the Turner Mission, by Colman Macaulay, the Secretary of the Bengal Government. He visited the Tibetan frontier and on interacting with the Tibetan border officials there got the impression that the Tibetans were favourably inclined towards trade with British India but were afraid of the Chinese Officials who were opposed to any kind of trade dealings with India. Macaulay, on returning, convinced the Government of the day to negotiate with the Chinese government on the subject of Trade between India and Tibet. A delegation was formed to visit China to enter into negotiations with the Chinese Government. All preparations for the departure of the delegations were made but the Government decided to cancel the proposed trip citing "International considerations".

Immediately after the above delegation to China was cancelled, a totally unexpected development was reported. The Tibetans had entered the frontier through Jelep-la and had occupied Sikkimese territory. They had entered almost 15 kilometers across the border and occupied the village of Lingtu. The Tibetans, elated at the news that the proposed delegation to China had been cancelled, had even threatened to occupy Darjeeling which was just about a hundred kilometers below their position. Panic was reported in Darjeeling as this news spread. The British Government made several representations to the Tibetan as well as the Chinese Government, all to no avail. Finally the British issued them an ultimatum and asked them to vacate the occupied territories by 20th of March 1888. On this day the British troops moved towards the Tibetan positions which they vacated and fled across the border. They launched several counter-offensives in the following months but all of them were repulsed. It was after this that the Chinese stepped in to bring about a settlement.

After much negotiation, a Convention was held in Calcutta on March 17th, 1890 and in 1893 a Trade Regulation agreement was signed between the British and Chinese representatives. These agreements provided for the opening of a Trade Mart at Yatung which was situated right at the border between Sikkim and Tibet, just across Jelep-la in the Chumbi Valley. This Trade regulation provided for free trade between Tibetan and Indian/British Traders for a period of five years. In this agreement it was agreed that all subjects of British India could enter Tibet and trade at Yatung without any restrictions. It was provided that although no European would be allowed to buy land or any houses on the Tibetan side they could reside at Yatung and could rent or take on lease shops or storage space. The Trade mart was to be inaugurated on the 1st of May 1894.

However these agreements remained only on paper as the Tibetans refused to abide by them stating that since they were not a party to the signing of the agreement they had no bindings towards accepting the same. They contended that it was the British and the Chinese who had negotiated and signed the agreements hence they had nothing to do with the it. The Tibetans started imposing a 10% tax on all goods passing Phari, which was at a distance of 45 kilometers from Yatung and on the only route to Lhasa or any other place in Tibet. They also built a wall across the entire valley before the trade mart at Yatung and refused to allow any trade to be conducted at the Mart.

For the next few years the British Government made several efforts to rectify this situation but all were in vain. In addition to trade issues various disputes with regards to the boundary between the two neighbours too came to the fore and which soured the already tottering relations between the two. It was hence decided in 1904 to send an expedition to Lhasa with Col. Francis Younghusband as its leader to resolve all pending issues and acquire an agreement which would put the relation between the two in the right direction. Col. Younghusband bulldozed his way into Lhasa, along the way fighting off the stiff resistance put by the poorly trained, poorly armed and equally poorly led Tibetan resistance. In the process the Tibetans suffered much loss of lives and many forts and villages all along the route to Lhasa were destroyed completely. After forcing its way into Lhasa, the British expedition compelled the Tibetan Government into signing an agreement which ultimately resolved all the previous issues of dispute and trade and commerce between British India and Tibet finally started in earnest.


As per this agreement, three trade marts were opened up- First at Yatung, Second at Gyantze and the third at Gartok in Western Tibet. Kalimpong, being located bang at the start of the route to Tibet automatically became the staging point for the entire trade that commenced between Tibet and India.

Thus was laid the foundation of the very successful and profitable trade between British India and Tibet which put Kalimpong on the world map and propelled it to fame and prosperity. 🏔️

MAJOR DHAN SINGH THAPA



Major Dhan Singh Thapa, (June 10, 1928 – September 6, 2005) born in Simla, Himachal Pradesh, was commissioned in the 8 Gorkha Rifles on 28 August 1949. The Sirijap valley, north of the Pangong lake in Ladakh, was considered vital for the defence of Chushul airfield. The 1/8 Gorkha Rifles had outposts there to thwart any enemy encroachment in the area. One of these outposts named Sirijap-1 was held by a platoon of 'C' Company under the command of Major Dhan Singh Thapa when the Chinese attack came on 21 October 1962. At 0600 hours on 21 October 1962, the Chinese opened a barrage of artillery and mortar fire over Sirijap-1 post. The shelling continued till 0830 hours and the whole area was set ablaze. Some shells fell on the command post and damaged the wireless set. This put the post out of commission. The Chinese then attacked the outpost in overwhelming numbers. Major Thapa and his men repulsed the attack, inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy. But the Chinese were not dismayed by the defeat. They mounted another attack in greater number after shelling the area with artillery and mortar fire. Major Thapa again rose to the occasion and repulsed the attack, inflicting heavy losses on the enemy.

He encouraged his men to be prepared for a third assault, which came after a short while indeed. The third Chinese attack was, however, more powerful and intense. The enemy now came with tanks in support of the infantry. The platoon post was now in a much depleted strength owing to the casualties suffered in earlier attacks. But the post held out till the ammunition lasted. When it was finally overrun by the Chinese, he jumped out of his trench and killed many intruders in hand-to-hand fighting. He was eventually overpowered and killed. His cool courage, conspicuous fighting qualities and leadership were in the highest traditions of the Army. Major Thapa was believed to have been killed in this engagement. He was later discovered to have been taken prisoner by Chinese soldiers and after his release from the POW camp, he resumed his military career. For his gallantry act, Major Dhan Singh Thapa was honoured with the highest wartime gallantry medal, Param Vir Chakra. 

KALIMPONG'S COFFEE PIONEER

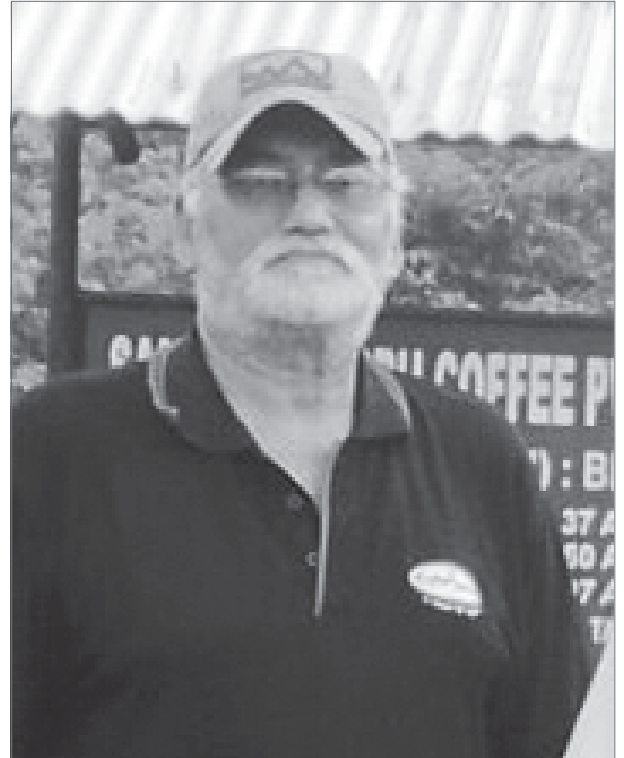
L L E W E L L Y N ANTHONY TRIPP

Tea planting in Darjeeling was begun in 1841 by Archibald Campbell, a civil surgeon of the Indian Medical Service. He brought seeds of the Chinese tea plant and started the pioneering work of Tea Plantations in the Darjeeling Hills.

A hundred and seventy years later, Llewellyn Anthony Tripp, a proper son of the soil from Darjeeling, is set to become the Pioneer who started Coffee Plantations in the Hills Of Kalimpong.

Coffee can do to Kalimpong what Tea did for Darjeeling.

This is a short write-up on his efforts to start coffee cultivation in the region.



Llewellyn Anthony Tripp was born in Darjeeling. His father was a Tea Planter and his mother was the daughter of Doctor Yensing Sitling Lepcha who was a renowned doctor at the time and was practicing in Darjeeling. Doctor Yensing Sitling Lepcha's place of birth was Chibu Busty Kalimpong. Hence Llewellyn Anthony Tripp can be considered a true Hill boy. He studied in Kurseong and Kalimpong, worked in the tea industry from the 1960s to the 1970s before going out to Papua New Guinea where he worked in the coffee industry till the end of 2012. He took up Australian citizenship but his heart and roots were still deeply embedded in his birthplace which was Darjeeling. His desire to be back home was so strong that he took up the status of Overseas Citizenship of India Certificate(OCI) with the aim of moving back to the Darjeeling Hills.

Having had so many years of experience in the Coffee Industry and its development programs, Llewellyn Anthony Tripp was a much sort after professional in the Coffee Industry. Coffee Plantations across the coffee growing world were looking to make use of his expertise and vying with each other to hire him but after having spent several decades outside his place of birth his longing to come back home was compelling. During one of his visits to the Hills of his birth (in 2007) he seriously looked into the possibility of growing coffee involving local Farmers in the

Kalimpong rural sector. His experience told him that the climatic conditions of Kalimpong were fully suitable for the growth of coffee. But, the most important factor was that he wanted to share his expertise with his own people, with the local farmers and make it a sustainable income for them for generations.

It was in early 2013 that he and his wife decided to return back to his place of birth (Darjeeling) and they initiated a small coffee project in Lolay and Gitdubling by involving rural sector farmers in Kalimpong. Initially they themselves funded a few farmers, established some small coffee nurseries from seeds which they had brought out from Papua New Guinea and also used seeds from some local coffee trees that were already growing in some pocket areas of Gitdubling. They approached various government agencies for funding but unfortunately none of these agencies obliged.

Funding his dream project was a problem in the initial days but luckily the Ladakhi Group of Industries from Sikkim showed interest in funding the project. He welcomed the monetary help and started the nurseries and other works associated with establishment of the Coffee Project. Now they have over 300 farmers who are already generating income out of coffee plantations.

Llewellyn Anthony Tripp is the pioneer who introduced Coffee in the Kalimpong Hills and which now is being followed by others.

Llewellyn Anthony Tripp is also presently involved as a Coffee Consultant for the Kingdom of Bhutan where he has, in two years, planted over 300 acres of new coffee and looking at planting another 700 acres over a three year time frame.

He is also been involved in advising coffee development programs in the North East, basically to small land holders in Garo Hill of Meghalaya.

RURAL ORGANIC COFFEE IN KALIMPONG



It is envisaged that a sound and sustainable Rural Sector Coffee Development Program involving the rural sector smallholder farmers of the Darjeeling Hills, especially in the district of Kalimpong, would be a feasible organic coffee development program.

The objective of growing coffee as a diversified tree crop to offset the earning capacity of the rural sector of the Hills would help in the income distribution within the rural sector communities. Coffee growers would be the sole beneficiaries of income derived from their coffee plantations without the involvement of any middlemen which is the case with cash crops such as Ginger, Cardamom, Potatoes, Millet, Broom, Paddy and other cash crops leaving the farmers only with certain percentage of income instead of 100% income.

With no proper marketing infrastructure in place the smallholder farmers are dependent on middlemen for the sale of their produce and hence are in a situation that they accept the buying rates from the middlemen.

Taking into consideration the above marketing factors, it would be a wise move by the concerned Horticulture and Agriculture marketing departments to seriously plan for the future by implementing new diversified crops, such as **ORGANIC COFFEE** which would be a very good and sustainable tree crop and could be incorporated with the traditional crops that the farmers are already growing.

Organic coffee cultivation will be a good diversified tree crop to be introduced to the rural agriculture and tree crop sector of the Kalimpong Hills and the surrounding areas. Furthermore, Organically Certified coffee would be an asset to coffee produced in the Kalimpong Hills and would be considered as a **Specialty Coffee** produced in the Himalayan region of the Darjeeling Hills of West Bengal. 🌱

IN SEARCH OF THE SOUL OF KALIMPONG

By J S Simick



The pressure cooker screeches. A steaming waft of soup for the momos spreads around the house. It is home again for me.

This time there is a mission for me, finding the soul of Kalimpong.

Hot *singharas* at Narayan Das. Pretty pastries walking the ramp on the shelves of Cafe CupCake. The cozy ambience of Art Café watching the string of lights on the ridge of Taarey Bhir..

Discovering our very own roots – and loving it – at Café Kalimpong.

A moment below the clock at Damber Chowk and seeing the same passage of cars and people seen last year and the years before that.

A walk down Main Road and being startled by how the ravages of time have changed the familiar faces you have been seeing since childhood.

A sentimental musical visit to Premalaya. Guitars, maadals, flutes, still inviting loving looks from youngsters itching to play the instruments.

Open up the world beyond the Teesta bridge as you flip over the magazines and newspapers at Himalayan Stores.

The colonial etiquette of having tea with the teapot being covered by a cosy, along with separate sugar bowl, milk jar, and tea strainer – was kept alive in the erstwhile Himalayan Hotel. Somehow the excitement of the early Everest expeditions was felt as you relaxed in the lush green lawns.

The spirit of Kalimpong would be forlorn if Kanchan and Novelty did not find a place, albeit in an attire of ruins. Laughter, dreams, romance, music – made our seniors happy in a way nothing else could.

Reverence and awe for the Almighty, and the monastic discipline are so obvious in the windy Durpin Gumba. The dominant statue of Shri Hanumanji, the huge Cross on a hill ledge, and the majestic statue of Lord Budhha, these have pervading presence at Viewpoint, Jorpokhari. They are the physical symbols of religious non-interference, practiced since days of old by diverse souls touched by Him.

Varieties of flowers and graves keep vigil over the dead at the Homes Cemetery. Riots of colours in orchids and cacti lend a sparkle to the many sophisticated flower nurseries.

Arched bamboo gates and the marigolds, hibiscus, geraniums, surround even the humblest abode of the hills. Poinsettias and pink lilies flourish on the slopes, unattended, like street urchins. The ever present, usually not so handsome mongrel, is the emperor within the compound .

Acorns and dry, shuffling brown leaves in the jungle of oaks and pines around the Homes Chapel.

A misty, introspective walk down the steep ridge of Tirpai, passing Elliot bend and Ahava.

From the top of Deolo Hill stretch out your arms and shout out your tensions as you embrace the wide Teesta-Rungeet Valley. See your dreams fly up and up through the bright yellow, red, orange sails of paragliders. Don't forget to search for *aiselos*, raspberry, in the nearby bushes.

Admire the golden hue of ripened rice in the flat Pudung valley, known as “the rice bowl of Kalebung”.

Have a short trip down to the Relli river. It as ancient as the hills. It cleans our bodies and our souls.

The noisy bowel of Kalimpong is the Haat Bazaar. It is a place where the sons and daughters of the soil reign supreme. Indigenous delicacies abound. Kinema, taaba, yellow butter from Lava, *salaam*, *filingay*, *celery*, *timbur*, *nakima*, *ningro*, *sisnoo*, *simrayo*, and *dalley*, fresh or bottled.

Mela Ground, or Mela Taar, has an encyclopaedic history of its own. Sparking yarns are many regarding competitions, like getting a hurricane lantern prize from the top of a greased pole. *Roti pings*, and cowboy-like fights among the notoriously popular legends of the town form the folklore of the town. But football reigns supreme, from the barefooted days till today.

Besides the much hyped *momo*, the hungry spirit of the town is propped up by the daily fare of *bhute ko bhaat*, *atta ko roti*, *rambera ko achaar*, *puri aludam*, *shafaley*, *thukpa*, *poleko hariyo makai*, *bhute ko makai*, *bhute ko bhatmaas*, *usine ko iskus ra tarul*, *chewra*, *iskus ko jara*. The new kids on the block are the hugely popular *fambi*, *alu chow*, and the lesser know *thaipo*. Food is, after all, the soul. All these are washed down with *nun ko chya*, often *fikka* by choice.

Music, dance and culture have seen a sudden surge, thanks to the development boards. This phenomenon sets us thinking deeper into the cultural soul of Kalimpong. Our modern singers who grew up eating the same things and walking the same uphill and downhill paths, have grown tall and have made St Augustine's School (SAS) famous. The words of their songs are the words of our hearts, and they have sung us to the world.

The lingo, local dialect lends a certain uniqueness to our place. Language is also soul. The local sense of humour has given us certain interesting expressions like – *jhyap*, *lepex*, *gyas*, *haves*, *wyeh hunu*, *dagdi*, *posyaunu*, *senterem*, *thoongnu*.

When there were no loud speakers what did our political leaders say ? People's opinions were swayed at meetings in the Mela Ground, Town Hall, and Maharani Chowk. I wonder what was their depth of understanding of the minds of the white man and the brown man who held the reins of administration. Do I detect words of self assertion and self determination still lingering on in these places ?

In my search for the soul of Kalimpong, I think I've found it.

The soul of Kalimpong hovers in these everyday, mundane places.

More importantly, the soul of Kalimpong resides in the hearts of people who are at peace with their future here – and know, that their posterity will find an eternal space here. 🏡

LHA TSHERING BABU- AN ICON OF HIS TIMES



DOLLY PUTSURE

In Kalimpong's serene surroundings where mist float and unveil the exotic beauty of this spectacularly lovely town, my maternal grandfather, Lha Tsering was born around the year 1896. He was the son of Rai Bahadur Achuk Tsering who was attached to the Foreign and Political Department of the Govt. of India and worked under Sir Charles Bell, ICS, the then Political Officer in Sikkim, as his Political Assistant. He died in Lhasa, Tibet in year 1920 while on a routine trip.

Achuk Tsering was the son of Likhu Tsering, a renowned contractor of his time. Likhu Tsering had undertaken major repair works near Gelkhola Railway Station below Likhu Bhir. His work was of such high quality that the massive slide area still bears his name as Likhu Bhir.

Ancestors of Lha Tsering are believed to be the descendants of the Sikkimese Bhutia Mangbelpa, in short MA-BEP community of North West Sikkim. They later migrated to Darjeeling District. Lha Tsering started his career as a *sepoy* in the Indian Army when the World War I broke out. He served the Army untill the end of the War and returned home to Kalimpong. Later Lha Tsering rejoined the Indian Army as an Emergency Commissioned Officer in the rank of 2nd Lieutenant during the Second World War. His hard work and dedication saw him being selected to the Intelligence Bureau and he subsequently served in the SIB,



He was the son of Rai Bahadur Achuk Tsering who was attached to the Foreign and Political Department of the Govt. of India and worked under Sir Charles Bell, ICS, the then Political Officer in Sikkim, as his Political Assistant. He died in Lhasa, Tibet in year 1920 while on a routine trip.

NEFA headquarters in Shillong and rose to the rank of Asst, Director. His last posting was in Kalimpong where he retired in the year 1955. He was an upright and dedicated Officer in service and equally respected amongst his local community. Lha Tsering was instrumental in the formation of the Denjong Kidu, a welfare Association of the Bhutia Community in Kalimpong. After his retirement he became a very well known and respected Social Worker.

Most of his retired days were spent in Ehhey amidst the lush green countryside paddy fields and tangerine orchards with his wife Yongden Lhamu. A generous gentle lady she was also deeply spiritual and faithful. He pampered her with a vast collection of music records and perfumes. Annual holidays and trip to Calcutta with his children were part of their lives. She outlived him and survived till the age of 104. Lha Tsering had a sister named Tsering Dolma. Being the only son of doting parents he had a wonderful childhood and grew up to be a strapping handsome young man, much sought after by the ladies.

On a lighter note, he was an incurable romantic; grandmother related a story about how he had sent word to her aunty asking grandma to meet him. On getting the news and being assured of his sincerity she, accompanied by a maid, trudged downhill to the pre-decided spot, behind a postman (those days the postman carried spears with clangors to scare off wild animals) and there he was waiting on horseback by the riverside to carry her off.

Lha Tsering had six children, four daughters Padma Dolma, Sangay

Lhamu, Pema Tsering and Ganden Tsering and two sons, Karma Tsering and Norzang Tsering. The older son Karma managed the property with his mother. He later went to Bhutan. The younger son was with the Sikkim Police.

Lha Tsering was a sportsman and loved hunting and fishing. His grandchildren remember how every weekend he took them to River Reang, some in his old Morris and others in his Land Rover. While the men went hunting for deers and wild boars, the womenfolk would concentrate on cooking and the children had the best of time playing in the stream nearby wading and collecting fingerlings and crabs.

He owned horses with stables in the heart of the town. He had a passion for horse racing and his horses won many races. Raja S. T. Dorji and he would often go to the Lebong Race Course in Darjeeling to indulge in the common passion for horse-racing. He would even bet on races held in Calcutta. My mother recollects how she would race to the Telegraph Office to send the bet and woe be gone, if she missed sending it on time. He always had the family interest at heart. He wanted his daughters settled well and married into good families.

On the other hand he was a very adamant person when it came to anyone disagreeing with his opinion or decisions. When my father Ganju Lama, VCMM proposed marriage to my mother my mother refused several times.



Girls at that time were afraid of Army men. My father who strongly approved of the match made her accept the proposal at gunpoint. His decision was vindicated considering they lived a happy life and had three daughters.

We used to have a big *Chhosom* (altar room) where people would come and pray. Hand written religious scriptures and precious statues of Gods and Goddesses were housed in that Altar were later offered to a monastery in Bhutan and some religious artifacts were also offered to a Rinpoche at Bagdhara, Kalimpong. My older sister Rinchen recalls how caring a grandfather he was. She credits her grandfather Lha Tsering for her interest in reading books. He used to have a good collection of books and was an avid reader. She also remembers how particular he was about having all four meals on time along with the entire family. She also recalls how particular he was with his attire and how well turned out he always was - trousers ironed perfectly and shoes brightly shining, even in the days of retirement.

With a full, meaningful and contended life, Lha Tsering died after a heart attack in the year 1966 at his lovely countryside home, 13th Mile, E c c h a y , Kalimpong. 🏠

KALIMPONG: TIBETAN TIMES IN DAYS GONE BY

BY LADEN TSHERING SAMDUP

www.tibetsun.com



Kalimpong is well-known and perhaps dear to many Tibetans. It was a major trading outpost to Tibet, and signs of its prosperity still stand in the form of huge unused and empty warehouses, majestic mansions of Marwaris at 10th mile, but now all rotting and in a dilapidated state after the jingling bells of the mule train from Tibet stopped. One of the majestic buildings in 11th mile area has been converted into Tibetan Government School.

Growing up in Kalimpong, donning the blazer and tie of St Augustine's School was considered to be a privileged upbringing. No words can describe the dedication of the European Fathers to impart to us the best of education. They gave equal importance to moral science or study of Moral values, which did ultimately help us to be good and respected citizens. The students were mainly of Tibetan Buddhist faith from Bhutan, Sikkim, and Tibet, and some had been placed in the care of these Fathers as boarders since childhood.

The school was at a distance from the town, and every day we used to walk down the meandering road in groups. Many a time a Tibetan friend, Tseten, used to stop and with misty eyes look across at the Himalayas and declare he would one day cross the Himalayas to visit his homeland. Whether he has done it or not is not known since we lost touch with each other after school.

One day in school our principal, Father Gressot, a Swiss missionary, in all seriousness began to shoo and usher us into a classroom to listen to the lecture of a serious-looking erudite gentleman. I remembered him as one of our seniors

often seen hanging around with a group of friends who had formed a musical band and used to belt out Beatles numbers at school concerts. He was very soft-spoken and appeared to be more immersed in his own thoughts striding across the room than in addressing us. We did not hear and didn't bother to listen to him. Today the whole world recognizes and listens to Sogyal Rinpoche.

In one of my visits home on vacation from college, I found a lama had occupied the room adjacent to the *chhoysom*. He was incoherent in his speech and often lisping, so it was easier to communicate with him in sign language. I was surprised to notice he always sat in meditative posture even in the night and never found him in sleeping posture. I asked him what he did in the night sitting awake and he replied he chased away the evil spirits. Many Tibetan acquaintances used to come to our house to visit him and it was amusing to see them lying in full body prostration at the main door before entering.

After completing my college studies I had given an interview for a job in Delhi and was anxious to be selected. I had heard that our lama was also a fortune teller so I approached him. He told me not to worry and the letter is already on the way. Sure enough, after two days I received the appointment letter. He stayed for many years with us before shifting to Suntala Kothi. In one of my visits home, I went to meet him at Suntala Kothi. He was over-ecstatic to see me and giggling like a child his hands grabbed my bowing head and touched it to his head. His love overwhelmed me and I remained transfixed bowing before him, head touching till he overcame his emotions. Later I came to know he was Thakpa Rinpoche, probably from Sera Monastery, Lhasa.

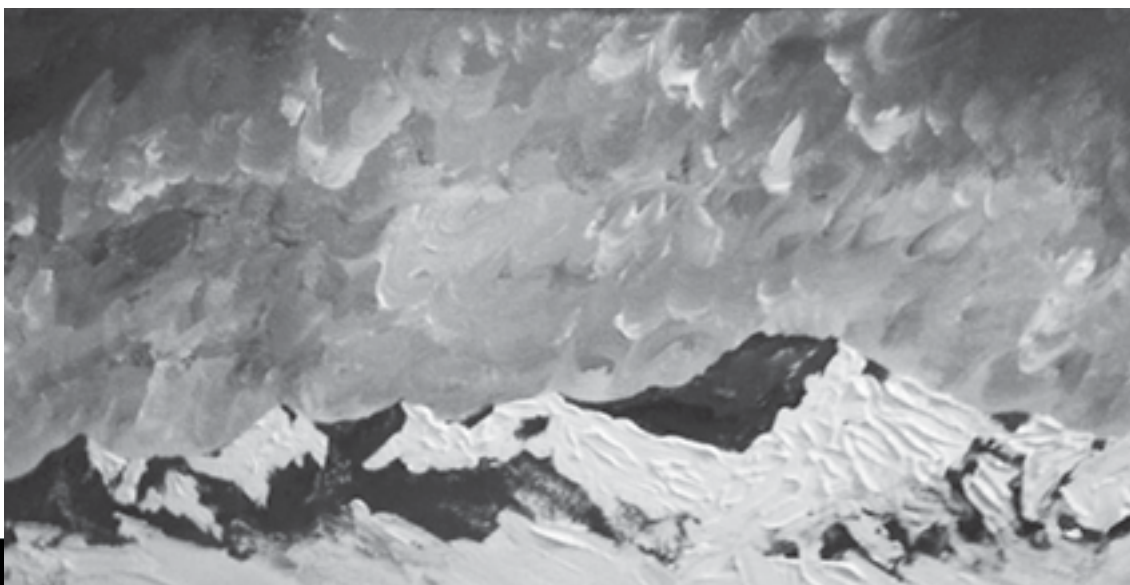
My father was the president of *Bhote kidduk* in Kalimpong, and in addition to social welfare activities he was the sole authority to identify and recommend the Bhotes of India for the tribal certificate which would entitle the holder for many facilities from Government of India like scholarships and reservations in colleges and employment. Many have used this privilege and today are occupying senior positions in Government of India. Such noble and altruistic provisions for the backward communities in the governance of country make India truly 'Mera Bharat Mahan.'

My father and I sometimes used to walk together to town, and at the 10th mile area I used to find him cheerfully waving at the many smiling Tibetans who would be doing Namaste to him and I could never fathom the reasons for such camaraderie between them and him. So, it surprised me no end and made me sit up smilingly when I recently read a news item about ongoing court case regarding *granting of Indian citizenship to Tibetans born in India*.

Now 'Captain saab' is no more, but I have as much faith in the Indian judicial system as in my father. I have come across many landmark judgments of Indian court giving expedient redresses where all other grievance machineries have failed. I have no doubt that justice will be done in the extant case also and the birthright of a child will not be forfeited just because he or she happens to be a Tibetan. It's a matter of time only.

THE MAN WHO CONQUERED THE MOUNTAIN

By Reshma Banthia Dugar



This is a tribute to a man, against whom fate conspired to test his resolve, those from Kalimpong who can identify this gentleman will testify to his indomitable fighting spirit, all of which he undertook with a smile. His contribution to Kalimpong, whether it was with his association with the Kalimpong Sports Association or the Lions Club or with the Kalimpong Chamber of Commerce, has been immense. Despite his weak heart condition and the series of tragedies that befell upon him, his smile and endearing nature never leaves his side. Rabindra Banthia will forever be a Kalimpong boy.

He added the last touch-up on the canvas, his brush strokes were bold but precise, and then he stepped back to analyze his masterpiece. After a critical examination he looked up at its original replica, Mt. Kanchenjunga stood tall and majestic, merging with the white clouds at its tips. A smile of satisfaction crossed his timeworn face. All around him spring had spread its magic, the Sal and bamboo trees were waving in the light breeze, colourful Rhododendrons made the hills picturesque, and the call of the Himalayan bulbul added sweet music to the atmosphere. The river below in the valley wound its merry way through curves and bends and softly bounced over the rocks. He felt peace at his core, and with a deep inhalation of breath he looked upwards ready for his final confrontation with his supreme opponent. This was not imaginary nor was it a hallucination but truly an old ritual between the “ONE UP THERE” and “HE” below. As he kept gazing upwards the clouds took its shape...the apparition was clear but behold this time he was emoting something warm. It smiled and had its arms open as if wanting to embrace him ...there were no check mates this time. This altercation with the one above had started some sixty years ago.

A lad of sixteen, with big dreams in his eyes, he had run away from home, to chase them. Greatly inspired by his idol Rabindranath Thakur, Ravi travelled for two days penniless, starved and scared to reach his dreamland Shantiniketan and to become the artist he craved for and not the painter that he was always chided. On arrival there he held his small bundle of belongings close to his heart and looked up to God to help him but lo! He rubbed his eyes...It couldn't

be. The clouds formed a face that sneered at him as if saying “let me watch how you handle this” to which Ravi boldly replied “I will, I will”.

He sold popcorns at the Ganga *ghat* during his afterhours to make ends meet and pay for his meager art equipment. Those days were his happiest although he missed his mother’s lap and *paranthas*.

It wasn’t long before his father discovered and bullied him back to his home in the hills and as if wanting to chain him forever, he was married off to a naive village belle. Disillusioned and disheartened Ravi gave up his dream and packed off his loved wealth of canvas, colours and brushes in an old rustic trunk and thrashed it away in the attic, locked forever. A part of him shunned. WAY UP ABOVE HE MUST BE SMILING.

Life rolled on and RAVI settled in, an extrovert and amicable by nature he earned great popularity, respect and love in his small town. His two teenage children were his lifeline and wife’s love made home a slice of heaven. “Ok, I call truce dear God.” he called upwards but there was no reply.

A year later, one night Ravi was awakened to loud noise, complete darkness and the pungent smell of burning flesh and wood. Oh God, my babies, my home, my shop.....

He ran like mad in the darkness, his better half not yet understanding the urgency of the situation, followed him up the stairs to their children, dragged them out of their beds and out into the street, where spectators and volunteers had started gathering by the dozens. The impact of the blazing fire hit them hard, arson had consumed the whole row of wooden houses. The heat was oppressive even from where they stood and Ravi could not breathe nor could he hear his heart in his chest. The fire, like a demon had gobbled his home, his livelihood,



Destiny plays its cards shamelessly and again one night when torrential rainfall, thunder and lightning kept all awake, the house suddenly shook mightily as if it was hit with the a force of horrendous magnitude. Ravi sprang to action disregarding all pleas to slow down, after all he had a weak heart. All children and others were rushed out and made to run down the hill with the greatest speed that they could. The wind was howling, crying as if warning people to keep safe.

his future. Everything crackled and sizzled under the huge inferno. The glowing flames leaped and twirled in a fiery dance and they rose high above. Ravi looked up at the smoldering grey clouds bellowing into the skies and suddenly in its shape came the same face cynically saying “CHECK”.

Ravi still had his queen and his knights and somehow, someone had managed to save that old rustic trunk.

The fire had taken a toll on him and he had suffered a weak heart, which led to a couple of surgeries and many days of recuperation during which his wife had held the reins strongly. Never a loser, Ravi strived to rebuild his life and home, and he did it. A lovely double storey cottage on the foot of a hill, beside a running spring was a huge accomplishment. He housed a hostel for young students who helped to keep the youth in him alive. Only thing that he feared was “Looking up!”

Destiny plays its cards shamelessly and again one night when torrential rainfall, thunder and lightning kept all awake,

the house suddenly shook mightily as if it was hit with the a force of horrendous magnitude. Ravi sprang to action disregarding all pleas to slow down, after all he had a weak heart. All children and others were rushed out and made to run down the hill with the greatest speed that they could. The wind was howling, crying as if warning people to keep safe. The ominous dark clouds overhead gave vent to rain that lashed down at great speed, pounding on tinned roofs and making rivers on the roads. Streaks of silver ripped the sky apart illuminating the earth to witness hell. The roar of thunder shook the earth below and the very melodious gush of the stream near the cottage was now dissonant and hostile. All the barbaric noise together was like a devils chant rising to a deafening pitch. The cottage had been a victim to landslide. Its strong walls had collapsed like the castle made of cards. Here again Ravi stood motionless, paralyzed looking at his lost fortune. Lightening bolted allowing a glimpse of the GAME PLAYER saying “CHECK”

Surviving a paralysis attack Ravi still had his queen and his knights and of course that unopened trunk.

His knights had grown up and sometimes held him responsible for the constant stringency of resources, a pre-requisite to a good life, and peer compatibility. Medical bills soared, limbs and teeth both grew weaker, desperation rose and loans mounted. Many a times Ravi was tempted to swallow those extra sleeping pills which rested at his bedside, the invitation was always open. He did take it in his mouth at one time but the thought of giving HIM the last laugh and being called a loser was not appealing. He rushed to the washroom and vomited his insides out. His wife never left his side.

After living the life of a gypsy for a couple of years, from this place to that friend's, father and son trying to make another business out of nothing, he grew weary and his silver hair resembled the colours of Thakur's paintings, the inferno, the steel bodied lamps of the operation theatre and the lightening from the skies.



After living the life of a gypsy for a couple of years, from this place to that friend's, father and son trying to make another business out of nothing, he grew weary and his silver hair resembled the colours of Thakur's paintings, the inferno, the steel bodied lamps of the operation theatre and the lightening from the skies.

The voice above said "give up son, check mate."

He still had his queen and his dream trunk and the decision was made.

Ravi, his queen and his only material survivor make it to their old ancestral scarred one room home. Finally his dreams are let out and surprisingly the fluency of the strokes of the brush hadn't been affected by the lapse of time nor had his passion. All the pent up emotions pour out on the canvas, the dull shades subdued by the brighter hues, such was his resilience. A battler till the end, he never gave up on his beliefs

And oh yes! He started a small popcorn business to cater for his little wants.

He looked up and smiled and so did HE....Ravi's trust in him never betrayed and HIS blessings never stopped...after all his queen and knights and trunk were always saved! 🍿



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ONE STEP TOWARDS CLEAN AND GREEN ENVIRONMENT...

Dawa Sangmu Sherpa, WBFS

A primary objective of waste management today is to protect the public and environment from potentially harmful effects of waste. Every individual, business or organisation must make decisions and take some responsibility regarding the management of waste generated by him or her.

A. ORGANIC WASTE DISPOSAL THROUGH CITY FARMING

Being inspired by CASFOS, Dehradun, Siliguri Social Forestry Division has tried to adopt organic waste disposal system through "City Farming" in and around Siliguri. It aims to provide homely solution for disposing the degradable waste at its source itself thereby reducing sanitization costs to various Govt. agencies mainly municipality.

This is a perfect solution for each and every household mainly in urban areas where we generally have to rely upon govt. agencies for disposal of daily generated kitchen wastes. It is also an innovative method for farming in urban areas essentially on terrace, balconies etc. using organic waste generated in the premises at its source itself and simultaneously growing vegetables, flowers, fruits, medicinal plants etc.

This process was invented by Padmashri late Dr. R. T. Joshi and it has been modified and enhanced by Dr. R. R. Deshpande (Aurangabad) using bioculture developed by BERI, Pune.

Items required :

Well perforated 200 litres metal /PVC drum, (holes of 10 cms diameter at various levels on its sides and Nail pointed holes at the bottom for drainage.

Sugarcane husk

Leaf litter and earth

Vermi 3G (Bioculture)

Process :

- 1) Install a well perforated drum (preferably a metal drum)
- 2) Fill with sugarcane husk at bottom followed by leaf-litter and good earth.
- 3) Repeat the process till it reaches the top of the drum
- 4) Add Vermi 3G (Bio-culture) to the top layer @ 100gm for 200 lit capacity drum
- 5) Watering to be done for next 10 days.
- 6) From 11th day onward the drum is ready for disposal of organic kitchen wastes.



7) In 200 litres capacity drum, daily 300 to 700 gms of organic waste can be added.

8) It is maintenance free and works efficiently for next 5 to 8 years or more depending upon the environmental condition.

9) Vegetable, flowers, medicinal plants and fruits can also be grown at perforated ends

10) The process is very easy and it efficiently decomposes organic kitchen wastes (except meat, bones and egg shells) without any odour.

SSFD has trained more than 130 persons till date and has successfully installed 15 drums in and around Siliguri since December 2017 (5 drums in Forest Complex, Sevoke road, Siliguri & 10 drums in locals), and we are able to dispose around 7.50 kgs (Average) of organic waste per day. In last five months we could dispose off a total of 1125 kg or 1.125 tons of waste. This way we will be able to dispose our daily kitchen waste 02.70 tons per year without any help of municipality just with 15 drums. Thus creating clean and green surrounding which is a duty of each and every citizen of the country.

B. COMPOSTING OUT OF KITCHEN WASTE (INCLUDING MEAT & DAIRY PRODUCTS).

As we all know that improper dumping of kitchen waste and widespread use plastics is spoiling the ecological balance , polluting our rivers, endangering lives of plants and animals and creating health hazards for human beings. Moreover awareness and implementation of efficient waste management processes is still far from reality.

Approximately 60% of the garbage we generate in our town Siliguri is degradable waste that can be composted yet not

even 0% of the municipal waste is composted and they simply get dumped in landfills. we have a choice, either convert the garbage into fertiliser or let landfills grow higher.

Keeping the above view in mind Siliguri Social Forestry has initiated “Bokashi” composting (Japanese Technique) out of kitchen waste since last few weeks at Dabgram Central Nursery.


Items required :

- 1) Specially designed bucket with air tight lid and a tap at the bottom.
- 2) Inoculated bran (wheat germ or saw dust combined with effective micro-organism)

Process :

- 1) Install a specially designed bucket with air tight lid and a tap at the bottom to drain out excess water.
- 2) Spread inoculated bran at bottom and put the kitchen waste.
- 3) Repeat the process till it reaches the top of the bucket.
- 4) When the bucket is full, shut it sealed (air tight) and set aside where it's out of direct sunlight for ten days or so for the process of fermentation.
- 5) After 10 days take out the fermented wastes and bury in a pit in the garden for another 15 to 20 days.
- 6) After that the compost rich in nutrients is ready for use.
- 7) Kitchen waste of all kinds including meat, small chopped bones and dairy products can be composted.
- 8) Since the fermentation process is anaerobic, processing needs to be free from oxygen.
- 9) Excess water drained in the process can again be used as fertiliser in diluted form for plants.
- 10) The Bokashi composting process is very easy and efficiently converts all kitchen waste including meat and small bones into compost.

Composting can reduce environmental pollution caused by disposal of organic wastes in landfills and streams or by incineration. Bacteria and fungi break down organic matter into compost that recycles all the nutrients required for plant growth.

The Forest Department may take up this composting scheme involving locals/beneficiaries in a larger scale which may not only help us to procure compost for our nurseries but will also help keeping environment/surrounding clean and green. On top of all, there is always a scope of generating sustainable livelihood for common people. 



DAWA SANGMU SHERPA, WBFS

In this day and age when Waste Management has become one of the biggest problems that the Developing World is being challenged by, the Siliguri Social Forestry Division, under the active and able guidance of Dawa Sangmu Sherpa, WBFS, has initiated and is promoting a very eco-friendly method of disposing off domestic garbage and kitchen waste. This innovative method if practiced by every household promises to revolutionize the waste management system in existence and holds hope for a cleaner and greener environment.

Dawa Sangmu Sherpa is a proper Kalimpong girl born and brought up in Kalimpong. She joined the West Bengal Forest Service and after serving at various locations is now posted as DFO, Siliguri Social Forestry Division. Her innovative and well-conceived methods of promoting a cleaner and greener environment has won her high accolades both from the public as well as from the Forest Department Officials.

She is the first Lady Officer in the WBFS from the Hills and has been an inspiration for an entire generation who have followed in her footsteps. She is currently the President of the WBFS Association.

SUDOKO

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			4	1	9			5
				8			7	9

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles,
one letter to each square,
to form three ordinary words.

ITNGA

KAOEW

NUCPHA

OTLBET



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

A: 

(Answers at the wedding)

QUIZ ON KALIMPONG

1. Name the first MLA from Kalimpong
2. In which year did Kalimpong become a Sub Division?
3. Name the first SDO and first District Magistrate of Kalimpong
4. Before being attached with Darjeeling District, which District was Kalimpong included in?
5. Name the Prince from Europe who stayed in Kalimpong in the 1950s
6. Name the first native medical doctor from Kalimpong

IDENTIFY THIS GREAT GORKHA PERSONALITY



ANSWERS

VC Ganju Lama

ANSWER: Gorkha Personality

1. Nar Bahadur Bhandari 2, 1916 3, D.A. White & Dr. Vishwanath 4, Western Duars District 5, Prince Peter of Greece & Denmark 6, Dr. Ongden Kongong

zind

poems

FACADE

BY RESHMA BANTHIA DUGAR

Laureen dress with strings of Cartier pearls,
The fit so perfect over the starved waistline.
Feet drenched in Jimmy Choo, and arms burdened with Coach,
Moist eyes hidden by Givenchy, the UV rays are just an excuse.
Lips camouflaged by Lancôme, parting in a perfect smile,
Soaked in the fragrance of Yves St Laurence, she mesmerises.
Chauffeur driven in a Limousine, she arrives at the Ritz,
With someone equally resplendent.
The fake smiles, the laughter so unreal,
All eyes on her, but her search unfound.
And that's the big reality.
Beneath the facade, you shall see,
A lonely child lost in a crowd, waiting to be found,
Smudges of tears wanting to be understood,
Aching body dying to be caressed,
And kissed like a baby.
Caged in brands and trapped by norms,
Her heart is like that of a pauper girl,
Wishing, wanting, waiting to be freed.

ADRIAN PRADHAN: ROCKING THE WORLD

1 Tell us about your childhood, school days, and growing up days in Kalimpong.

My childhood was not a happy one as I come from a broken family and only a child who comes from it knows the hardships of it. School days was more of walking than studying as I used to walk from 13th Mile, Upper Echhay to 8th Mile St Augustine's School. The only motivation for me to go to School was to learn singing and music from my music teacher Late Chandra Mohan Ghising and also to mention Mr Anthony Namchu who had a soft corner and understanding for me. My failure in class 1, demotivated me to fail more in classes 3 and 8, which led me to change school to SUMI. I grew up with my mother, in music with music and some best friends.

2. Tell us about the bands that you played with in Kalimpong?

I first formed a band UREEKA with my school friends in 1989, I later joined a band named FLAMES which consisted of Clement Britto and Albert Gurung on guitars, Norden Lama / Late Binod Pradha on bass, Benjamin Britto on drums, it was fun playing with this band and we even performed in Delhi that time and got featured in the SUN magazines too which was an honour for us.

3. Why and when did you go to Kathmandu?

There is a famous saying in the region "*Darjiling ko kalaakar lai ki Nepal ley laancha ki ta Kaal ley laancha*" I am happy that Nepal took me. It has been more than two decades now that I have been living and contributing in Nepal, I am glad that I made this move and I feel blessed here.

4. When did you get your first big break in Kathmandu?

With the help and support of Nirakar Yakthumba Daju and Phiroj Shyangden Daju, I was lucky to join the band 1974 AD. My first recorded song with this band was *Samjhi Baschu's* English version, and second one was *Chudaina* which became super hits.

5. You have a number of hit songs and albums. Any favorites and why?

Hidda Hiddai is my favourite, written by Phiroj Shyangden and composed by Nirakar Yakthumba. I always picture the story of my broken family whenever I sing or perform this song

6. You have a very large fan following? Would you consider yourself a celebrity?

Yes by Gods grace I do have a large fan following. The love and respect that my fans give me is something that no amount of money can buy. I thank God and each and everyone who supported and loved me.

7. How do you deal with your celebrity status in Nepal & the world over?

I am a simple man with a simple life style, and I mix around with people anywhere and anytime. It makes me feel more comfortable with this open attitude, it is just a mind over matter principle, The more narrow one think the more complex one making himself/herself.

8. Apart from music do you have other interests?

Music is my bread and butter and I am lucky to have a job that I love, not everyone is blessed with this fortune. Apart from my singing career, I like to trek, Eat, watch movies and listen to other great musicians. I also like to watch theatre plays and broadways.

9. If a kid came to you and said he/she wanted to be as famous as you, what would your advice be to the kid?

10. Your message for the youths of Kalimpong

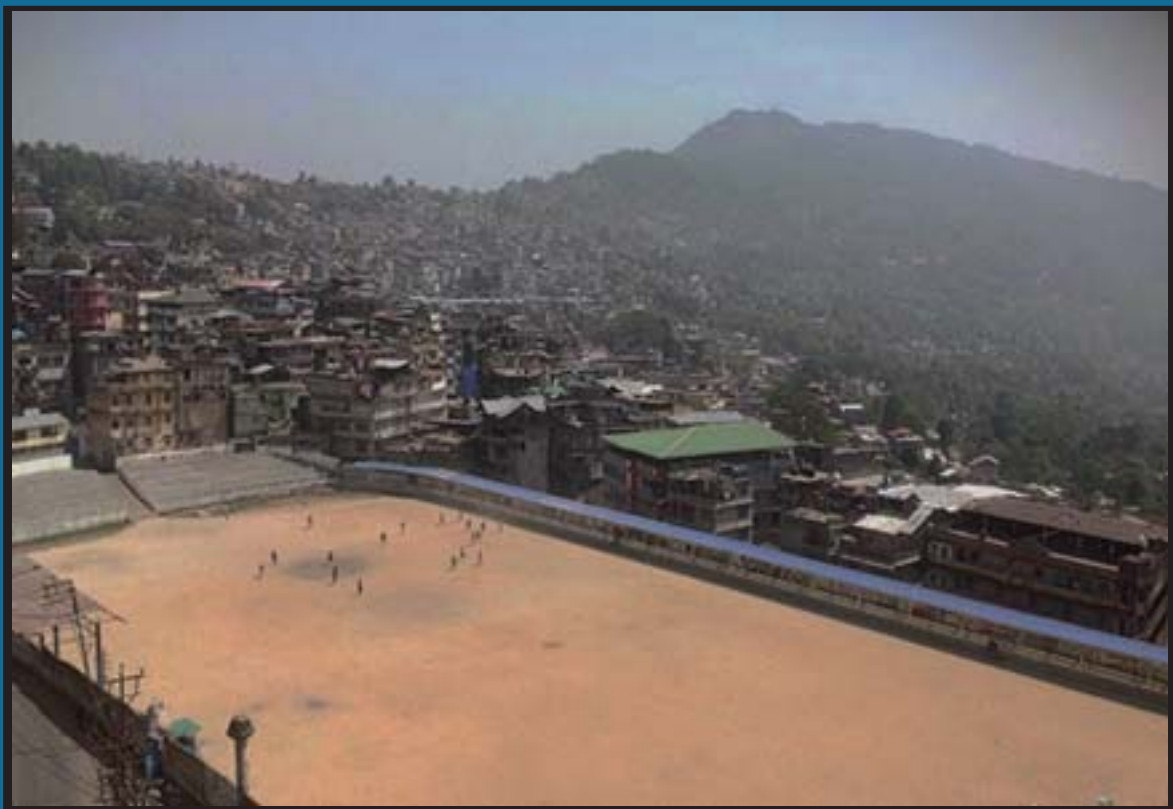
In today's modern world it does not take much to be famous, but to remain famous is what is important. I believe that the key to success are the 3Ps- Practice, Perseverance and Patience. At the same time remember to stay happy also and not to get lost in this rat race of the society. Kalimpong has always been a beautiful place, please preserve it and keep it as it is. Love and Prayers for all.



ADRIAN PRADHAN ROCKING THE WORLD



MELA GROUND DURING PRE-INDEPENDENCE TIMES



MELA GROUND AT PRESENT